

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 L-03

NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00

RSR-01 /115 W

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R 291708 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6746

INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 0642

E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PINT SCUL ELAB DA

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT BUDGET SLASHING INCITES STRIKES
AT SCHOOLS.

REF: COPENHAGEN 4 97, 621

1. SUMMARY: NEGOTIATIONS IN PARLIAMENT TO SLASH FY 1973
AND 1974 GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES HAVE RESULTED IN ONLY A
MODEST TWO- PARTY (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC - SOCIALIST PEOPLES'
PARTY) SAVINGS PROGRAM. ONE ITEM INCLUDED IN COMPROMISE
PROGRAM, A PROPOSAL TO SHORTEN CLASS HOURS AND INCREASE
WEEKLY TEACHING LOAD IN ALL DANISH SCHOOLS AND UNIVER-
SITIES, HAS SPARKED RASH OF PROTEST STRIKES BY STUDENT
AND TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. NEGOTIATIONS AMONG FIVE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT OVER
PAST THREE WEEKS SEEKING WAYS TO SLASH GOVERNMENT
EXPENDITURES DRASTICALLY DURING FY 1973 AND 1974, FAILED
TO PRODUCE THE BROAD FOUR OR FIVE- PARTY COMPROMISE
DESIRED BY GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH THREE OPPOSITION
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PARTIES WERE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF DRASTIC REDUCTIONS IN PUBLIC SPENDING, THEY WERE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THE INCREASED REVENUE MEASURES IN GOVERNMENT'S ORIGINAL 31- POINT PROPOSAL; INCREASED CORPORATE TAX RATE AND NEW TAX ON BOND YIELDS, AMONG OTHERS. LEFT- WING SOCIALIST PEOPLES' PARTY (SF), ON WHICH GOVERNMENT DEPENDS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT, WAS FOR ITS PART UNABLE TO ACCEPT SIGNIFICANT CUT- BACKS IN SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS, AS PROPOSED BY THE OPPOSITION. UNDER PRESSURE FROM CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT THAT BUDGET ACT BE ADOPTED BY APRIL 1, GOVERNMENT ON MARCH 25 SETTLED FOR A TWO- PARTY COMPROMISE AT MODEST LEVEL OF APPROXIMATELY 1.1 BILLION KRONER (167 MILLION DOLLARS), THE MAXIMUM ACCEPTABLE TO THE SF. BUDGET ACT INCORPORATING THESE SAVINGS MEASURES IS EXPECTED TO BE ADOPTED MARCH 30.

3. ALTHOUGH VARIOUS OXEN COULD POSSIBLY BE GORED BY THE SOC-\$3. - SF SAVINGS PLAN, GREATEST RESENTMENT HAS BEEN AROUSED BY ONE ITEM IN PLAN, A REDUCTION OF THE CLASS PERIOD IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FROM 50 TO 45 MINUTES, PERMITTING THREE EXTRA PERIODS PER TEACHER PER WEEK, AND SAVING ESTIMATED 130 MILLION KRONER IN FY 1973. APPROXIMATELY 1500 TEACHERS REACTED WITH " SPONTANEOUS BOYCOTT" OF CLASSES MARCH 23, CHARGING THAT PROPOSAL WAS BASED PURELY ON BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS, WITHOUT REGARD FOR PEDAGOGICAL CONSEQUENCES. EXTENSION OF BOYCOTT ACTIONS TO MONDAY MARCH 26 WAS EFFECTIVELY PREVENTED BY EDUCATION MINISTER KNUD HEINESEN, WHO THREATENED TO TAKE CASE TO LABOR COURT.

5. WILDCAT BOYCOTT BY TEACHERS HAS INSPIRED SYMPATHY ACTION BY PREVIOUSLY INSIGNIFICANT AND INACTIVE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PUPILS (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVEL), WHO HAVE CALLED FOR ONE- DAY STRIKE MARCH 30. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ONE MILLION STUDENTS MAY PARTICIPATE.

6. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT'S ABRUPT CUT IN CLASS PERIOD SEEMS SINGULARLY INEPT AND WILL NOT MAKE ITS TASK ANY EASIER WHEN TI COMMENCES NEGOTIATING A NEW WAGE CONTRACT NEXT WEEK WITH DENMARK'S HALF MILLION CIVIL SERVANTS (AMONG WHOM TEACHERS ARE AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT.)

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